Crisis Management and the Role of some ECOWAS states in West Africa

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Abstract

Conflict is inevitable in all human relation, but it is not always desirable, nor is it always profitable. When not managed properly, the cost in human lives, properties, political, socio-economic opportunities could be disproportionate with the desired outcome. This paper seeks to address the role of some ECOWAS member states in crisis management in the West African sub-region. The paper investigates the nature and character of African conflicts and also discusses the link between conflict management and conflict resolution. The linkage theoretical perspective is adopted for the study in order to determine the problem. The paper, therefore, recommends that ECOWAS needs to work closely with the Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations in their efforts to manage conflict. There should be a political will on the part of the African leaders. With political will, sheer rhetoric can truly be transformed into reality. Government in the sub-region must also learn to show neutrality in conflict. West African leaders must be prepared to truly integrate without necessarily surrendering the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their individual states.

Key Words: Conflict, Management, Resolution, ECOWAS and Electoral Process.

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Introduction
Since the dawn of human community, conflict has been identified as part of the dynamics of human and community relations. Issues of governance, identity, resources allocation and power struggle coupled with personality cults and problem of state sovereignty have indeed conspired, not only to cause staggering losses of lives, destruction of properties and environmental
degradation, but have provided Africa with the inevitable record, of hosting more than seven million refugees and over twenty million displaced people. When a Conflict ensues, it poses a threat to peace and security within the affected group zones. Conflict easily divides members into portions and where not constructively handled and managed, could breed tension, hardship, crisis, insecurity and wars.

There were instances in the past where conflicts between individuals escalated to group, national or even state levels. For this reason, it becomes pertinent to stem any situation, which appears potentially explosive at its earliest manifestation through the intervention of third parties that have the interest of the warring groups and the larger societies at large. In line with precept, it has become tradition for external bodies to seek restoration of peace and security through accredited intervention forces, whenever conflict erupts within nation-states or between one nation-state and another. This is because the international community, having been reduced to a global village, (even before globalization) has seen the danger in allowing conflict within nation-states to degenerate to the extent of threatening or endangering international peace and security.

Having just emerged from the devastating World War II, the victorious allied nations conceived the idea of the United Nation Organization (UNO) as a replacement for the failed League of Nations, to save succeeding generation from the scourge of war. In keeping with the laudable objectives, the UN as provided in Chapter VII Articles 39-51 of the UN Charter set to achieve the maintenance of international peace and security. Article 25 and 27 provided the responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of International Peace and Security.
From the forgoing argument, countries enter into bilateral arrangement for the same purpose of conflict management in the international system, since the end of the World War II. Since its formation in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has maintained a policy of deterrence, which is essentially a defensive strategy that views attack on any one member as an attack on all. The essence of NATO’s deterrence policy is the provision of sufficient forces and resources to ward off any acts of aggression or conflict against members states. The organization undertakes various joint training exercise and military operations, of which one of the most ambitious was the intervention in Kosovo in 1999.

In line with NATO’s concept of collective security, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the Africa Union (AU), which was established in 1963, mooted the idea of an African High Command for the collective defence of Africa. However, the Charter of the OAU provided for non-interference in the internal affairs of member countries. This provision and the ideological differences of the member states did not allow for appropriate political leadership for the management of conflict in the region. Thus OAU, response to crisis has remained the passing of resolution without following them through.

At the sub-regional level, efforts were made to create economics and political union to encourage economic and socio-economic integration. Thus, the defunct East African Community was formed in 1967 while the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was formed in 1975. In the similar fashion, The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the
Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) were formed as concrete strategies to prevent, response and resolve some of African’s security related problems.

Arguably, what are the essence of government and the formation of socio-political bloc if there is no secured environment that will promote integration and development? The formation of ECOWAS with its attendant responsibility in conflict management in the sub-region remains the pivotal step that should be maintained to match the prevalence of armed conflict in several parts of West Africa. According to Hare conflicts have “turned Africa, the most diverse of all the continents in the world into a continent unable to turn its trend of diversity into opportunities for development…..Conflicts have torn the social fabric of the African society. Conflict have separated and split families. Brothers had raise against brother, father against son and son against father” (Hare, 1998).

Established in 1975 originally as a regional organization to essentially promote the economic integration of the fifteen Member States, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) It has been gradually transformed, under the pressure of political events, into an organization also responsible for finding solutions to armed conflicts and other political crisis which were undermining peace and security within the community .space

The objectives of this paper are to establish The Crisis Management in the West African Sub-Region: The Role of some Member States of ECOWAS. The following form the specific purpose of this article: To examine the responsibility of ECOWAS in conflict management in the
sub-region, identify and examine the ECOWAS involvement mechanisms and their impact in conflict management.

This work is divided into seven sections. The first section is set to give an introduction to what we intend to do. The second section explains the conceptual clarifications while the next section explore theoretical framework. The fourth section examines the link between conflict management and conflict resolution. The fifth section discusses the nature and character of conflict in Africa. The sixth section looks at the ECOWAS intervention in conflict management in Togo and Guinea-Bissau and, the seventh section contains conclusion and recommendations.

**Conceptual clarifications**

**Conflict**

Conflict refers to the contradictions inherent in power relations and which manifest themselves in individual and group interactions with one another and with nature in the pursuit of limited resources or opportunities. Conflict is the motor of transformation and is either positive or negative. It can be creatively transformed to ensure equity, progress and harmony; or destructively transformed to engender acute insecurity. Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human life.

Conflict, according to Wikipedia, is a state of opposition, disagreement or incompatibility between two or more people or groups of people, which is sometimes characterized by physical violence. Boulding (1962) perceived conflict as ‘a situation of competition in which future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of other’, Maoz (1982) sees conflict as “a state of incompatibility among values, where the achievement of one value can be realized only at the expenses of some other values. For
Pruitt and Robin (1986), “conflict is a perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties’ current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously”. Olusegun Obasanjo (1993) defined conflicts as, a situation which arises when what is supposed or perceived to be one’s loss either directly or indirectly as a result of the action or inaction of another person or group of person. Nwolise (2003) sees conflict as a clash, confrontation, battle or struggle. Stagner (1967) defined Conflict as a situation in which two or more human beings desire goods which they perceived as being attainable by one or the other, but not both, each party mobilizes energy to obtain a goal, a desired object or situation, and each party perceives the other as a barrier or threat to that goal.

Stedman (1991) is of the view that “Conflict stems from the basic fact of human interdependence, seeking to satisfy their needs, wants and desire, people make demands upon themselves, upon the physical environment, upon other people, and upon whatever organization and institution that appear to be in a position to help them” Stedman, in assessing the nature of conflict in Africa argues that: African conflict arises from problem basic to all populations, the tugs and pulls of different identities, the different distribution of resources, access to power and conflicting deductions of what is just, fair and right. Louis Coser (1956) in his conceptualization of conflict added another dimension to the concept of conflict. He asserts that conflict comes from incompatibility of goals, a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponent are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Mial, Ranbothan and Woodhouse (1999) observed that Conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change. It is an expression of the heterogeneity of interest, values and beliefs that
arise as new formations generated by social change come up against inherited constraints. It is possible to change habitual responses and exercise intelligent choice. Zartman (1991) too observed that conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction, an unavoidable concomitant of choices and decision. Scholars have generally agreed that conflict is almost inevitable in the interaction between human beings, either individually or group. It has equally been established that all human societies, communities, organization and interpersonal relationships experience conflict at one time or another in the process of their regular interactions. Validly also, conflict is not restricted to any level of human interaction, thus, it can occur at any of the levels of human interactions such as within group and between groups, within state and between a families, as well as in interpersonal relationship. It was also found that conflict is not necessary bad, abnormal or dysfunctional, and that, in fact, conflict can be productive. Conflict is a product of escalated competition between and among people, over resources, power, interest and needs.

**Conflict Management**

Conflict Management is the process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict. It covers the entire area of handling conflict positively at different stages, including those efforts made to prevent conflict, by being proactive. It encompasses conflict limitation, containment and litigation. In the word of John Burton, this may include “Conflict prevention” (Burton, 1990), a term he uses to connote containment of conflict through steps introduced to promote conditions in which collaborative and valued relationships control the behaviour of conflict parties. The term “conflict management” is perhaps an admission of the reality that
conflict is inevitable, but that not all conflicts can always be resolved; therefore what practitioners can do is to manage and regulate them

**Conflict Resolution**

This is a more comprehensive term, which implies that the deep-rooted source of conflict are addressed and resolved. Wallenstein (2005) describe conflict resolution, is associated with a purposeful search for ways of accommodating the explicit interest of the parties in conflict. Thus neither through victory, nor does it refers to transformation of conflict. Victory means that one party dominates other. Conflict resolution therefore is a set of procedure that will bring about a change in the attitude of parties involved in a conflict. Conflict resolution addresses the fundamental question concerning the issue of justice. Conflict resolution scholars argue that conflict has an ontological basis in human needs, and it is the denial which causes violent conflicts, or causes re-solvable differences to degenerate into armed violence or armed conflict. Conflict prevention describes the whole range of development and crisis intervention efforts to reconcile parties and groups with incompatible interests, and to pursuit of divergent goals from degenerating into armed violence. Also, when the pursuit of irreconcilable differences and interests escalate into armed conflict and is resolved, the efforts and intervention strategies to prevent relapses into further violence is described as conflict prevention.

**Theoretical framework**

Linkage theory is based on the interplay between domestic and international political processes (i.e. link between internal and external variables). For instance, the intensity of conflict in Togo
and Guinea Bissau led to the concern by other West Africa countries and thus the decision to collectively move in as a sub region through the monitoring group with the aim of restoring
peace in those states. Rosenau posits that national system like all organized human groups are conditional by and respond to environment (Rosenau, 1990). The theory suggests that:

“political analysis would be greatly facilitated if propositions that link the stability or instability, functioning of institutes and goals of national political systems to variables in other external environment are systematically developed” (ibid).

Through the linkage theory, the Liberian crisis which ranged from 1990-1997 could be situated within historical context and factors that gave rise to the formation and establishment of the ECOWAS Peace Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The approach will link the two important variables in our society. The theory further emphasizes on the fact that there is a linkage between domestic process and the external environment or situation towards which policies of state are directed.

Two important characteristics are observable. First is the link between the domestic or preferably internal situation and external environment. This can comfortably explain the relationship between the in Togo and Guinea Bissau and ECOWAS intervention. This Theory on a Second note can be used to identify the extent to which particular forces can positively or negatively affect the foreign policies of states.

Leary on the other hand analyzed linkages between underdeveloped nations and developed ones and maintained that national and international phenomena are indeed connected particularly in the change we observe in the underdeveloped countries. He argued further that the underdeveloped nations are unequally linked to the developed nations. These links are in form of military, trade, politics e.t.c
In the case of this study, the linkage is among underdeveloped nations of West Africa, who to a great extent have pulled resources together to save a member from apparent extinction resulting from war. The theory also posits that unequal links between countries are not restricted to the relationship between developed and underdeveloped but could also be obtained among the underdeveloped countries.

The selection of the linkage theory in the conduct of the study is predicted on its holistic view as a theory, and the fact that it fits appropriately in the attempt to comprehend the relationship between the conflict and its resolution mainly from outside. Northedge shed more light on the linkage theory when he argued:

“Restricted by pressures originating within the country the internal political situation. There is virtually nothing existing within the borders of the states which does not have some influences on posture its government assumes in international affairs” (Northedge, 1986)

The linkage theory is made of compartment i.e. input-output linkage pattern with the intellectual sub-division called analytical process of linkage theory. (Rosenau 1990). There is the policy input which is the sequence of behaviour that originates from within a polity and either culminated or are sustained by its environment. There are policy inputs which are those behavioural sequences within a polity to which outputs give rise.

On the other, there are environmental outputs which are those sequences of behaviour that originate from the external environment of a policy that are either terminated or sustained within the polity. There are environmental inputs as well. Rosenau tried to show the pattern of links between polities in the input and output linkage pattern. The pattern according to him is penetrative process, reactive process, emulative process and focused linkage (ibid).
The role of ECOWAS in the resolution of the Togo and Guinea Bissau conflict is best in circumstances understood and studied applying the linkage theory. The theory provides a better understanding of the linkage i.e. domestic faction and the link which informed the decision of ECOWAS to intervene militarily through the ECOWAS Peace Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

**Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution: The Links**

Conflict Management is occasionally treated as if it is synonymous with conflict resolution. Conflict management and conflict resolution use similar approach, conflict management however may not address fundamental issues of the conflict; it may just give a temporary relief which may not be long lasting. Conflict management therefore is not a total eradication of conflict but it gives a temporary relief. The conception of conflicts, its management and resolution have led to terms such as a peacekeeping, conflict prevention, third party intervention and the focus on mediation and negotiation, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace building. Conflict resolution emerged as an alternative means of resolving rather than merely pacific settlement of disputes. As a sub-discipline, conflict resolution emerged as a reaction to the limitation imposed by realist approach to conflict analysis, management and resolution (Burton 1990). The conflict resolution and conflict prevention spectrum consists of a range of options employable for non-violent management of conflict. The expression “conflict prevention” is commonly used to refer to action undertaken with the express intent to anticipate a conflict or forestall the possibility of its escalation into generalized and uncontrolled violence whether between two groups or at the level of society at large. This term is generally defined in two different but related meanings either to address
structural or underlying factors—the so called “root causes” of conflicts, that is conflict resolution or to carry out practical—“operational”—means to curb an ongoing conflict or halt its escalation into deadly violence that is conflict management.

Conflict management involves the control, but not resolution, of a long-term or deep-rooted conflict. This is the approach taken when complete resolution seems to be impossible, yet something needs to be done. In cases of resolution-resistant or even intractable conflict, it is possible to manage the situation in ways that make it more constructive and less destructive. The goal of conflict management is to intervene in ways that make the ongoing conflict more beneficial and less damaging to all sides. Conflict management approaches tend to focus more on mitigating or controlling the destructive consequences that emanate from a given conflict than on finding solutions to the underlying issues causing it. Typical conflict management strategies are the use of military force for deterrence or peace-keeping: separating the conflict parties from each other so that they do not keep inflicting harm on each other. While conflict management and resolution are reactive, meaning that they come into motion once conflict has surfaced, conflict prevention tries to anticipate the destructive aspects of the conflict before they arise and attempts to take positive measures to prevent them from occurring. Conflict prevention is concerned with the proliferation of internal conflicts and civil wars within states and wars between people within a state.

Conflict management is occasionally treated as if it is synonymous with conflict resolution. True the two are strongly related but represent slightly different processes. In an objectives context,
Conflict management derives from the guideline provisions of conflict management. It is logical to assume that conflict management is the application or operational phase of conflict resolution. It represents the enforcement mechanism, strategies responses for the achievement of the ideals and goals of conflict resolution as a peace agenda. Put simply, conflict resolution represents a theoretical design, while conflict management represents the operational and implementation mechanism and process. The role of the mediator/third party becomes very clear. It tries to work within the agenda setting of conflict resolution. It is an exercise in legal and diplomatic practices, including diplomatic contacts with disputing parties and beyond; initiating rooms for accords; institutionalizing mechanism for achieving restraint or ceasefire when applicable; verification exercises to determine the level of compliance; peace-monitoring mechanisms and the enforcement of disarmament and arms control, says no small and light weapons. It is important to note that conflict management and conflict resolution is not an imposition on the two parties. It works well only within the mutual consent of disputing parties. It works out better when the facilitators of conflict management and resolution are perceived to be neutral and objective, and not an instrument of one party against the other.(See Nigeria Vs Cameroon over Bakassi Pennisular, ICJ Rubrics).

Conflict management is often considered to be distinct from conflict resolution. In order for actual conflict to occur, there should be an expression of exclusive patterns, and tell why the conflict was expressed the way it was. Conflict is not just about simple inaptness, but is often connected to a previous issue. The latter refers to resolving the dispute to the approval of one or both parties, whereas the former concerns an ongoing process that may never have a resolution.
Neither is it considered the same as conflict transformation, which seeks to reframe the positions of the conflict parties.

The Nature and Character of Conflict in Africa

The primary defining characteristics of ethnicity is culture (Charles 1976). The obvious circularity of this reasoning, especially when evaluated in the light of the claims of the primordialist led Cynthia Enloe to post that basic function of ethnicity is to bind the individual to a group with the claims that awareness of a common identity constitutes its principal feature (Cynthia 1973). In all, ethnicity tends to be constructible as the feeling or consciousness of belonging to a group that share certain common socio-cultural elements (Kwame). Ethnic conflicts often have the touch of manipulation. In the other words, many of the crisis and conflicts that are branded ethnic conflict are strategic and manufactured. In Africa, generally, ethnicity has been subject to a whole lot of politicization such that its peculiar nature seems to be shrouded in obscurity. In Africa countries ethnicity and the conflict arising from it have been objects of manipulation by political leaders to achieve desired economic advantages and political desires. More properly, the predisposition towards interpreting social conflicts as ethnic ones are induced by what is regarded as an attempt in economic marginalization of groups political manipulation and, more aptly and precisely, the absence of functioning social and political systems to take care of the needs of the population.

Moreover, Citizenship transcends the idea of belonging to a country by legal definition. It refers to the substantive, normative idea of membership and participation in a political community. It
reflects the idea of equality of political members of that society. In preliminary understand, citizenship is taken to be the meaning of membership in a political community. Hill contends citizenship as a status denotes right and duties constitutionally guaranteed to all members of society. To him citizenship is about power and its distribution about the framework of public collective decisions and accountability for those decision (Hill 1994). In a sense, citizenship can be seen as an important locus of the struggle for inclusion. The question of citizenship is central to the process of integration. The notion of integration in the light of citizenship presupposes the idea of equal rights. The end of citizenship as a means of integration is equality or right of the population. In the light of the historical development of social and political forces in Africa an interpretation of conflict must start with comprehending the problem nature of the question of citizenship and national identity in very pungent language, different attitude to citizenship have given rise to political conflict. The type of ethnic group to which one belongs is central to one’s definition of and relation to political conflict in Africa. The dynamic of political relation in Nigeria for instance is replete with various instances of the outbreak of political and national conflict. The problem of citizenship in Africa and its related component of alienation is domination by one group over other ethnic groups with the same political community.

Furthermore, another form of conflict in Africa is environmental conflict. This is borne out interests and increasing attention over the advantages and benefits within and between countries over natural resources. At the global levels, human activities are changing the environment. Since the end of the cold war more attention has been given to the role of environment factors in shaping global security and international relation (Klare and Thomas 1994). The environment has
generated much interest in the relation between and within countries. The struggle within and between states is for the control, exploitation, manipulation and access to ecological resources. One dimension to these is the issues of conflict they have generated in the bid to control dominate or exploit the use and benefit of these environmental resources. Lewis Coser (1956) describe conflict as “a struggle over values claims to status power and scarce resources in which the aims of the opposing parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals”. The conflict between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi Peninsula is an example of conflict over the benefits and advantages accruing from the environment. The history of environmental conflict in Nigeria can be attributed to the inter-ethnic struggle for resources, the most crucial being the control of rent from oil. The conflict in Niger Delta is an example of conflict within nations over natural and environmental resources.

In addition, the existence of classes in Africa’s political economy is real and not imaginary; the heart of political conflict in societies is the issues of class. The distinctive character and crucial factor in the definition of classes is the domination of economic, political, ideological wealth, power and values by one social group over the other group. The struggle amongst competing groups for political power are said to assume the nature of classes and the struggles and conflict that follow it. Class conflict in Africa countries is patterned along the following feature; the general non-uniformity of identified class and their composition, the multiplicity and centrality of bourgeois factions as the inevitable conflicting class; the attribution of a non-material basis for the classes identified, and their motives for conflict (Ehimika, 1999). Even though the explanation of class conflict in Africa is varied, there is still a convergence of opinions with respect to its
general character and basis. Central to the incidence and occurrence of class conflict in Africa is power. Claude Ake (1989) contends that there is an irreconcilable struggle between an existent dominant class and subordinate classes in respect of their hold on power. This triggers off conflict and violence. According to Bade Onimode, the idea of class politics is central to explaining national conflict in Nigeria, to him a central feature of political interaction amongst and between these classes is that of a “terrain of struggle between bourgeois ideology proper and working class ideology”, a struggle he describes as “inter-class” and “intra-class” (Onimode, 1988). Sam Nolutshungu (1990:89-115) also conceives conflict in the Nigerian political society as resident in the political class. To him, the Nigerian political class right from inception had always presented an image of a class in perpetual conflict. Central to Ake and Onimode analysis is expanded by the emphasis on the role of the state. The state is described to be an actor in the production, mediation and control of class conflict. Eme Ekekwe sees the state as the major source of struggle amongst social classes because of the political power invested in it (Ekekwe, 1985). Larry Diamond attributes crisis and conflict in post-colonial politics in Nigeria (Africa) to the emergence of a modern state with vast economic resources. To him, “the legacy that colonial rule left was the development of a modern state that dwarfed other organized elements of the economy and society” (Diamond, 1988). The substance of the conclusion is that even though there is a semblance of truth in the conclusion that conflict in Nigeria (Africa) can be explained via the channel of class and class politics, the idea of class conflict is also subsumed in the incidence of conflict in other forms.
Religion forms an integral part of identity construction and re-construction in politics all over the world. The history of religious differences in Africa is of importance in the analysis of conflict in Africa. In Sudan, the north and south are divided in terms of religions. This has been very instrumental to the occurrence of civil war in that country. The south is Christian and its history has been of resistance to the Islamisation of the whole country. The north is Muslim. The conflict of vision and identity as provided by these different religious worldviews accounts greatly for the civil war. Again, a notable and observable phenomenon in Nigerian politics is that the north and south are separated by religion. Before and after independence in 1960, Nigeria’s socio-political existence was threatened by ethnicity. In recent political manifestations, expression and development, what has taken over the problem of ethnicity and ethnicism is religion. At the heart of the crisis is the history of dominance. Incidentally, both the south and the north have different religious traditions. This plurality of interests in term of religion gave birth to a host of interpretation on the question of Nigeria’s identity. One reason why it has become increasingly difficult for the north and the south to be united is the different religious commitments, backgrounds, history, experience and culture.

Finally, there has been the dynamics of both inter-and intra- communal conflicts, which are increasingly becoming interesting in Africa as well as the social and political implications of such conflicts. The nature of this conflict is such that they occur within particular countries themselves or between two or more different communities. Sometimes, the conflict is between two states such as when there is a federal policy with respect to state creation. The limit to boundary adjustment between these states that were formerly one have often sparked off violent
conflicts between them. They have a federal dimension to it in the sense that such conflicts may be borne out of the entitlement to some privileges. Again, the careless manner in which the colonial masters administered the relations between these communities have been cited as responsible for inter-and intra-communal conflicts in Africa practicing federalism has been a favourable precursor to the incidence and outbreak of these conflict. Rather than solve inter-ethnic conflict the federalism has been a favourable precursor to the incidence and outbreak of these conflict. Rather than solve inter-ethnic conflict the federal agenda has contributed to it in many ways. This is because federalism, as practiced in most Africa countries, is flawed; because it allows for domination by a single ethnic group.

**ECOWAS intervention in Conflict Management in Togo and Guinea-Bissau**

In 1967, Kenya political scientist Ali Mazuri published his seminal work toward a pan-Africana. This study was written at a time when the old colonial order was coming to an end and the newly independent states of Africa were searching for indigenous system to manage Africa’s international relations. Mazuri asked the question ‘who will police Africa’s now that the imperial order is coming to an end? The phrase ‘Africa solutions for African problems became a popular slogan in the 1960s to describe the inspirations of African leaders to achieve what Mazuri called continental jurisdiction. This concept urged local African actors to manage their own conflicts, and inter-African intervention was considered more legitimate than extra-African intervention (Mazuri 2001). ECOWAS transformation from an economic to a political integrative scheme started with the promulgation of the 1976 Non-Response to Aggression Treaty. Subsequently, in 1978, a Non-Aggression protocol and the 1981 protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence
(MAD) were signed. As Kwesi Aning argued, despite the opportunities created by these protocols and their subsequent revision in 1993, ECOWAS conflict management system was not based on the hypothetical institutions provided for. Rather, they were established because of the cognitive experiences resulting from the resolution in the Liberian war and the Sierra Leonean crisis (Kwesi, 2000).

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 primarily to facilitate economic integration and development in West African sub-region. But over the years, the regional economic organization evolved into regional security organization through its military intervention in the conflict situations in the member states and as well created a new organ, ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The peacekeeping intervention began with Liberian civil in 1989 to Sierra Leone in 1997, Guinea Bissau in 1998, Liberian Second Civil War in 1999, Cote d’Ivoire in 2002, Togo 2005, Second Cote d’Ivoire Civil War in 2011, and Mali in 2012 and Second Guinea Bissau crisis in 2012 (Agyapong, 2005; Belmakki, 2005; Levitt, 2008; Francis, 2009; Olonisakin, 2010; Yabi, 2010; Kabia, 2011). The ECOWAS recognizes the fact that no meaningful economic integration and development will be possible under conditions of conflicts as the sub-region was fast assuming the status of conflict region. Prior to the military intervention, ECOWAS had always relied on traditional method of conflict resolution as a result of widespread conflict and instability in the sub-region in the 1990s and early 2000s, the leaders came to the realization that economic prosperity cannot be achieved in the absence of peace and security.
Having discovered that unconstitutional and undemocratic leadership nature of most ECOWAS member states constitutes conflict, the Heads of states and Government of the member states of ECOWAS established the Protocol A/SP/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance, supplementary to the Protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution peace-keeping and security. As provided under section 1, Article B of the supplementary protocol, ECOWAS was empowered to intervene in Togo. What happened was that following the death of President Gnassingbe Eyadema who had been in power since 1967, there was an attempt to install his son Faure Gnassingbe as the interim President, in contravention of the constitution of Togo and the protocol afore-mentioned. The move was strongly condemned within and outside Togo. Condemnation of this act of the Togolese military and pressure from ECOWAS Leaders forced the resignation of Faure Gnassingbe, who initiated the process of Presidential election within sixty (60) days, in line with the provisions of the constitution and ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. To achieve this, ECOWAS and other international bodies sent observers to monitor preparations for the presidential elections, which were eventually held on 24 April, 2005. Despite certain abnormalities during the organization of the election, the election observers concluded that Presidential election could be deemed to have been free, fair and credible. Mr. Faure Gnassingbe was elected with 60.22% of the vote, following the elections, the Prime Minister was nominated from the Moderate opposition and a government, which included representatives of the civil society, and the opposition was formed.

In the light of the above, the ECOWAS Leadership, particularly the ECOWAS Chairman and AU Chairman have been at the forefront of the efforts to end the political crisis in Togo. They
have condemned the violence, warning that it is likely to undermine the opportunity presented in Togo to build a stable democracy and called upon all Togolese forces to work together in a government of national unity and reconciliation. In furtherance of these efforts, ECOWAS Mini-Summit, which was also attended by President Omar Bongo of Gabon, was convened and chaired by President Olusegun Obasanjo in Abuja on 18 May, 2005. President Faure Gnassingbe and all the political party leaders in Togo actively participated in the deliberations. It was agreed that a government of national unity would be formed; whose main preoccupations would be electoral reforms, national reconciliation, and early return of refugees and improvement of the national security system.

In the same vein, ECOWAS considers the discussion on the 22 key EU requirements as essential to the normalization of the relationship between Togo and EU. The two parties are urged to continue working together. More so, ECOWAS has pledged to continue to work with Togolese authorities, UNDP, relevant bodies in the reintegration process of the remaining refugees still in the neighboring countries of Benin and Ghana. Presently the situation in Togo is commendable as President Faure Gnassingbe is making every effort to restore hope on Togolese.

Moreover, Guinea-Bissau took another dangerous turn on 12 April 2012, when the army arrested Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior, who was about to be elected president. A military junta accused him of conspiring with Angola to curtail the military’s power and quickly installed transitional authorities, before officially stepping aside on 22 May. International condemnation was swift, but differences developed between the Economic Community of West African States
(ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP). The former, pushed by Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso, supports a year’s transition, the latter, especially Portugal and Angola, immediate resumption of the presidential vote. Coup and transition may have opened a way for vital reforms, which must go beyond changes in the army and combating the drugs trade. But for that to happen, ECOWAS and CPLP must reach a consensus on working with international partners to mobilize resources for security, judicial and electoral reforms and refusing to validate Gomes Júnior’s illegal exclusion from political life.

Crisis Group warned three months before the coup that two related factors posed significant risks for stability: the likely victory of the prime minister in the presidential election and the military presence in the country of his ally, Angola, including its part in security sector reform (SSR). Both caused the military (Forças Armadas da Guiné-Bissau, FAGB) to fear what might be in store for it under a Gomes Júnior presidency. The coup that suspended the constitutional order and broke off the second round of the presidential election (scheduled for 29 April) was not a mere reflex of an isolated minority of narco-military against a reformist civilian government. Rather, it demonstrated that the tense relations between civilian and military elites that have marred progress since independence in 1974 remain unresolved and that these in turn feed into broader grievances around issues of citizenship, entitlements, the rural/urban divide, regional inequalities and the mounting sense of historical marginalization felt by the Balanta ethnic group that depends on its majority in the army to champion its cause.

Controversy rages over the role opposition leaders may have played. Both Serifo Nhamadjo, a rival within Gomes Júnior’s Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) and political heir to the deceased president, Malam Bacai Sanhá, and Kumba Yalá, a former
president whose Partido para a Renovação Social (PRS) is rooted in the Balanta community, have influence in the military. But the coup was also stimulated by the inability of the electoral process to deliver uncontroversial results. Nhamadjo and Yalá, as well as Henrique Rosa, a former transition president, rejected the March first round results, claiming registration flaws and voting fraud.

The coup also confirmed that Gomes Júnior’s divisive style made him many enemies among politicians as well as soldiers. The legitimacy he gained by improving the lives of ordinary citizens was weakened by opposition accusations of nepotism and that he was implicated in not yet credibly investigated political killings in 2009. While he denied the accusations, many citizens put their lives on the line in his defence during the April 2010 military turmoil but failed to do so two years later. The events likewise raise questions about why international efforts to help the tiny, poor, aid-dependent country have so persistently failed to bring real change. After the European Union (EU) pulled out as a result of the April 2010 troubles, and in the absence of other major international patrons, Angola did much to produce stability, but it has not been able to stimulate transformation or build and maintain consensus at the national and international level on shaping the future. It allowed itself to become an object of suspicion in the country and locked in jurisdictional fights with some key ECOWAS member states, which weakened its credibility, acceptability and efficiency. Guinea-Bissau is unlikely to receive substantially more attention in the near future for several reasons: the international community’s preoccupation with other, much bloodier situations; the capacity of the transitional authorities to maintain domestic order so far and play the dialogue game; and the willingness of ECOWAS to engage with them.
The CPLP’s tough stance – seeking a stabilization force and completion of the presidential election – has encouraged Gomes Júnior and the PAIGC to refuse all compromise and made ECOWAS the military’s favourite with which to broker a deal.

The regional organization has obtained two significant concessions: preservation of the parliament and release from detention of Gomes Júnior, who left the country two weeks after the coup. The price has been ECOWAS support for a one-year transition, to end with new elections. Nhamadjo took over as transitional president, and Rui Duarte Barros, a PRS associate, became prime minister, formed a cabinet and presented his transition program on 21 July. ECOWAS deployed a 629-man strong police and army contingent (ECOWAS mission in Bissau, ECOMIB) to help with security sector reform, support the transition and facilitate the departure of the Angolan military mission, which was completed peacefully on 9 June.

Transitional structures are now in place, and new elections have been set for April 2013. But the transition remains unsteady. The new authorities are a mix of technocrats and opposition politicians of varied stripes, and a new sharing of spoils is under way the impact of which on state capacity is yet unclear. THE PAIGC remains in control of the parliament and hostile to the transition authorities, while politicians backing the transition are trying to keep Gomes Júnior at bay through their accusations. The military has formally retreated from public life with the dissolution of the junta in May but remains influential. Factionalism persists within it, and rumours
of a new coup circulate endlessly. The withdrawal of much international assistance and disruption of the cashew nut export sector herald rough times for the transition authorities.
But though there are limits to the transition as engineered by ECOWAS, it is the only game in town at this point. The more radical demands Gomes Júnior and the PAIGC are making with encouragement from Angola and Portugal could make the transition a riskier exercise. Tempting as it may be for some to hold back in the not unrealistic hope it will collapse, it is more prudent to work through ECOWAS and in the present framework. In their quest for a negotiated settlement, ECOWAS and its key member states have allowed themselves to be perceived internationally as letting the junta get away with too much and doing away with elective democracy, all in order to neutralize Angolan influence. The bulk of the international community has nevertheless been pragmatic in accepting the regional organization’s leadership – it is the player with the ear of the military and the transitional government – but uneasiness persists in diplomatic circles over its handling of the situation. This makes it difficult for the transitional government to gain international recognition and recover suspended aid, without which it will be hard to mobilize resources for a successful transition and necessary reforms.

ECOWAS and several of its member countries have legitimate interests in Guinea-Bissau, as well as leverage over the new authorities. That leverage can and should be used to work out a peaceful solution. However, ECOWAS, which has put a good deal of its prestige on the line, should learn from Angola’s experience: it must not act in isolation from the rest of the international community and become party to the complex conflicts that have divided Guinea-Bissau. It should instead help the transitional government realize and then do what is needed to rebuild international good-will: demonstrate its sincerity about reform. There would be a much better chance for this to happen if especially ECOWAS and CPLP would put aside their turf wars and develop a common strategy. The CPLP and its member countries should show greater

**Conclusion**

ECOWAS in the past played important role in fighting colonialism, dictatorial regimes and nation building, political crisis creates another opportunity for the ECOWAS state to show their acumen in handling the crisis engulfing some West African States or country. Experts in crisis management must be allowed to source for and acquire information about the violence. ECOWAS should re-invigorate their machineries towards playing mediatory role in conflict management by distinguishing properly between propaganda and truth; verify incidences of violent acts to actually know whether it was perpetrated by the group or not before intervention.

ECOWAS should not shirk in their responsibility as the case may be and called the government, and other stakeholders to order on the need to end crisis through dialogue as many wars are not won on the battle field but on the table (not war-war but jaw-jaw). Every Nation or Countries must rise up to the challenge and acknowledge the fact that there are strengthens in our diversities whether in terms of religious, political or ethnic differences.

**Recommendations**

- ECOWAS needs to work closely with the Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations in their efforts to manage conflict. The experience of 1990s has shown that
one of the weaknesses of previous conflict management strategies was the gross neglect of
the civil societies in many African countries have become strong and effective. In view of
this development, it has become necessary for ECOWAS to work in close conjunction
with the civil society. A major refocusing is very important more than ever before, so that conflict management project could be collectivized, such that everyone is more or less a stakeholder in promoting peace and security.

West African Leaders should promote the political and military responsibility for ECOWAS. In concrete terms, personalization of power, information and re-traditionalization of leadership role have been a major threat to West Africa peace and security. Thus, most leaders have chosen to rule without the interest of the people at heart, thereby reproducing conflicts, insecurity and instability. West African states must face this reality; until our leaders think more of the welfare of the citizens; the rate of conflict in the sub-regional would remain very high. They should propelled by the developments in the international system-sustainable development and work out tangible modalities to curb insurrections in the region.

Regional Integration is beneficial to all member of alliance and could pave way for a genuine political and economic development of the member countries.

Democracy and the rule of Law; ECOWAS, as part of its peace initiative should adopt Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and security so as to promote democratic governance and rule of law in all member states. This has become imperative; hence the sanctity of rule of law in all members. It will provide an avenue for addressing the root cause of conflict in contemporary Africa.

There should be a political will in by African leaders. With political will. Rhetoric can truly be transformed into reality. Without it, not even the noblest sentiments will have
chance of success. African leaders must demonstrate the will to rely upon political rather
than military responses to problems. Democratic channels for pursing legitimate interests and expressing dissents must be protected, and political position respected and accommodated in constitutional forms. The leaders must summon the will to take good governance seriously, ensuring respect for human rights, openness and fairness, promoting transparency and capability in public administration.

Governments in the sub-region must also learn to show neutrality in conflict. This neutrality is essential in winning the confidence of the parties in disputes and goes a long way in solving problem.

West African leaders must be prepared to truly integrate without necessarily surrendering the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their individual states. West African leaders must also learn to be truly democratic by doing away with autocratic tendencies that leads in sit-tight postures.

ECOMOG is predicated on the desire to resolve the conflict in Liberia through peace keeping and enforcement. It is necessary to strength the peace monitoring group and makes it a permanent force to be deployed to any area where conflict arises. The existence of ECOMOG as a standing force has the capacity to reduce the preponderance of ethnic and class conflict in the sub-region as it will serve as a deterrent force.
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